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ABSTRACT

The Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) was the first, and the largest, federal program of assistance to libraries, and as amended in 1990, contains eight titles that authorize aid to public libraries. In 1994, the appropriations authorizations for LSCA programs were extended for one year, but without substantive amendment, by the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA), and will therefore be considered for revision and reauthorization by the 104th Congress. LSCA funds are intended to focus on innovative services, services to populations with special needs, information-sharing networks, and adult literacy activities, and to be used as discretionary funds for special or new services or to purchase new equipment for computer networks. However, for each fiscal year from 1982 through 1995, progressively fewer funds have been requested by the presidential administrations. The primary rationale offered for limiting these funds was that LSCA had served its original purpose of extending basic library services to rural and other previously unserved areas, that LSCA funds represent a very small share of total library funding, and that federal aid to libraries should either be eliminated or limited to a few authorized activities of the highest priority. Nevertheless, Congress has continued to provide appropriations for LSCA, and a 1991 White House Conference on Library and Information Services produced many recommendations for increased federal aid to libraries under the major categories of access, governance, marketing, networking, national information policy, preservation, services, technology, training of end-users, and personnel. In response to these issues, six reauthorization options are proposed for LSCA. Contains four references. (Author/MAS)

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CRS Issue Brief

Library Services and Construction Act: Reauthorization Issues

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December 29, 1994

by
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Library Services and Construction Act: Reauthorization Issues

SUMMARY

The Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) was the first, and continues to be the largest, Federal program of assistance specifically to libraries. As amended in 1990 (P.L. 101-254), the LSCA contains eight titles that authorize aid to public libraries. In 1994, the appropriations authorizations for LSCA programs were extended for one year, through FY1995, but without substantive amendment, by the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA), P.L. 103-382. Thus, the LSCA will be considered for substantive revision and reauthorization by the 104th Congress.

In comparison to total revenues for public libraries from all sources, LSCA funds appear to be relatively insignificant. LSCA funds are intended to focus on innovative services, services to populations with special needs, information-sharing networks, and adult literacy activities, and they likely represent a large share of "discretionary" funds that may be used for special or new services, or to purchase equipment for computer networks.

For each fiscal year 1982 through 1995, the Reagan, Bush, and Clinton Administrations have requested substantially fewer funds for LSCA programs than had been appropriated for the preceding year. In fact, no funds at all were requested for fiscal years 1983 through 1990. When any funds were requested, it was proposed that they be limited to a portion of the activities and Titles authorized under the LSCA. The primary rationale offered for these proposals was that the LSCA had served its original purpose of extending basic library services to rural and other previously unserved areas, that LSCA aid represents a very small share of total library funding, and that Federal aid to libraries should either be eliminated completely or limited to a few authorized activities of the highest priority.

However, the Congress has continued to provide appropriations for the LSCA, providing $132.7 million for FY1995. Further, a 1991 White House Conference on Library and Information Services produced numerous recommendations for increased Federal aid to libraries under the major categories of access, governance, marketing, networking, national information policy, preservation, services, technology, training of end-users, and personnel.

Reauthorization options for the LSCA include: (1) eliminate the LSCA, on grounds that its original purpose of expanding basic access to libraries has been met and continued aid is insignificant; (2) consolidate the eight current LSCA Titles into two, focused on increasing access through networking and other technology, and improving library services to persons with special needs (an American Library Association proposal); (3) continue only LSCA Titles I and III, the current programs for innovation, services to the disadvantaged, and information-sharing networks; (4) add selected "national" activities to the State formula programs of the LSCA; (5) substantially expand the LSCA, incorporating recommendations of the 1991 White House Conference; and (6) continue the LSCA in substantially its current form.

MOST RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

The Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA), the primary source of Federal aid to public libraries, is scheduled to be considered for reauthorization by the 104th Congress. Major reauthorization issues are likely to include whether direct Federal aid to public libraries continues to be warranted and, if so, how the LSCA can be modified to more flexibly and effectively address current needs for public library services

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

Current Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) Programs -- Description and Issues

The Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) was the first, and continues to be the largest, Federal program of assistance specifically to libraries. As most recently substantively amended in 1990 (P.L. 101-254), the LSCA contains eight Titles that authorize aid to public libraries. In 1994, the appropriations authorizations for LSCA programs were extended for one year, through FY1995, but without substantive amendment, by the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA), P.L. 103-382. Thus, the LSCA will be considered for substantive revision, termination, or reauthorization by the 104th Congress.

In addition to grants under the LSCA, public libraries or librarians might benefit from grants for library training, research, and demonstration projects authorized under Title II, Part B of the Higher Education Act (FY1995 appropriation -- $11,416,000); research and conferences supported by the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS; FY1995 appropriation -- $901,000); provision of U.S. Government documents through the Government Printing Office's Depository Library program; grants from such other Federal agencies as the National Endowment for the Humanities for development or preservation of special collections, or from the Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) for development of information-sharing networks; and a variety of services and materials -- ranging from cataloging information to preservation research and "digitizing" documents and images so that they can be shared on computer networks -- from the Library of Congress.

Funds have never been appropriated for LSCA Titles VII and VIII, which were initially authorized by P.L. 101-254, and appropriations for Title V were last provided in FY1993. Grants are allocated by statutory formula to the States under Titles I-III of the LSCA, while Titles V through VIII authorize smaller, discretionary grant programs, where awards are based on national competition among applicants. Title IV, for services to Indians and Native Hawaiians, is funded through set-aside from the appropriations for Titles I-III. In addition to the library assistance programs authorized in Titles I through VIII, the Act requires that libraries receiving LSCA funds not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, age, gender, national origin, or handicapping condition in providing space for public meetings.

FY1995 authorizations and appropriations for LSCA programs are listed in the following table.

TABLE 1. FY1995 Authorizations and Appropriations For Library Services and Construction Act Programs

Program	FY1995 Authorization	FY1995 Appropriation
Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) Title I -- Public library services	$100,000,000	$83,227,000
LSCA Title II -- Public library construction and technology enhancement	55,000,000	17,792,000
LSCA Title III -- Interlibrary cooperation and resource sharing	35,000,000	23,700,000
LSCA Title IV -- Library services for Indians and Native Hawaiians (non-add; reserved from Titles I-III)	(3,800,000)	(2,495,000)
LSCA Title V -- Foreign language materials acquisition	1,000,000	0
LSCA Title VI -- Library literacy programs	10,000,000	8,026,000
LSCA Title VII -- Evaluation and assessment	500,000	0
LSCA Title VIII -- Library learning center programs	6,000,000	0
Total, all Titles	$207,500,000	$132,745,000

Over the past several years, LSCA appropriations have increased, but not always sufficiently to keep pace with changes in price levels. The trend in "real" (i.e., adjusted for inflation) appropriations for the LSCA depends largely on the time period covered. *Without* adjusting for price level changes, total LSCA appropriations were $67.5 million

for FY1980, $118 million for FY1985, $126.3 million for FY1990, and $132.7 million for FY1995. *With* adjustment for estimated price level changes, using the deflator for State and local government purchases of services, the FY1995 appropriation represents an estimated 7% increase over the FY1980 amount, but an estimated decrease of 23% and 9%, respectively, from the FY1985 and 1990 levels.

In comparison to total revenues for public libraries from all sources, LSCA funds appear to be relatively insignificant. A recent ED survey of public library revenue sources in 1992 found that only 1.0% of public library revenues were reported as coming from the Federal Government, with the bulk of revenues (78.6%) being provided by localities, and a small share (12.0%) from State governments. The remaining revenues (8.4%) were said to come from "other" sources, which may include Federal aid received indirectly, from the LSCA and other sources.

Thus, the 1.0% Federal share very likely understates the LSCA and other Federal contributions to public libraries. First, Federal aid to public libraries is often indirect, and may have been categorized in the State or "other" categories by survey respondents. Second, some forms of Federal aid are "in kind" -- e.g., interlibrary loans or services to the blind or physically disabled from the Library of Congress, materials received through the depository library system (these services are described later in this report) -- and would not be included in revenue calculations. Finally, if the total of LSCA appropriations for FY1995 ($132,745,000) is compared to the survey's figure for total public library revenues (all sources) for 1992 ($4,997,421,000), the resulting estimated Federal share is 2.7% for the LSCA alone, aside from the (limited) non-LSCA Federal support. And, as is discussed below with respect to Title I, LSCA funds likely represent a much larger share of "discretionary" funds that may be used for special or new services, or to purchase equipment for computer networks.

Title I, Library Services

Title I is the largest Federal assistance program specifically for public libraries. While it is also the most broad and general of the Federal library programs, the legislative intent is that Title I funds not be used for general operations; rather they should be used to expand the range of library services offered in the States, either by serving previously unserved or underserved populations -- especially the elderly, the disabled, or those living in residential institutions -- or by providing new types of services to the public at large. Activities specified in the statute that may be supported with LSCA Title I funds include library technology enhancement, library services to child care facilities, intergenerational library programs in which older adults assist school-age children, and local library literacy centers, among others. To help assure that Federal funds are supplementary, LSCA Title I includes a series of maintenance-of-effort provisions, requiring continued expenditure from State and local funds of at least 90% of the previous year amount for both library services in general, and the State library agency in particular.

Title I grants are allocated to the States on the basis of a formula that includes a State matching requirement. Two percent of total Title I appropriations are set-aside for grants to organizations or agencies providing library services to American Indians and Native Hawaiians (under Title IV). From the remaining funds, each State first receives a flat grant of $200,000 ($40,000 for each Outlying Area), while additional funds are allocated among the States on the basis of their total population. The

required State matching rate varies from 33% to 66% of the total (Federal plus State match) program costs, depending on the State's personal income per capita in comparison to the national average. The lower the State's relative personal income per capita, the lower the required matching percentage.

The distribution of LSCA Title I funds among public libraries within States is determined largely at the discretion of the State library agencies. One limitation is that in years when Title I appropriations exceed $60 million, a portion of the Title I grant in most States must be reserved for libraries serving cities with a population of 100,000 or more. (The required proportion of grants, made from appropriations in excess of $60 million, that must be reserved for libraries serving cities with a population of 100,000 or more varies by State, depending on whether the State contains any such cities and, if so, whether 50% or more of the total State population resides in such cities.)

Issues. LSCA Title I funds are intended to be used for innovative services or services to special populations, such as the elderly or those in institutions. Unfortunately, the most recent evaluation of actual use of LSCA Title I funds was published in 1981 (*An Evaluation of Title I of the Library Services and Construction Act*. Jan. 1981. Washington, 1981.) According to that study, the use of LSCA Title I funds was almost evenly split between ongoing services to the general public, versus innovative programs or services to special populations -- e.g., disabled, limited-English proficient, Indian, institutionalized, or other disadvantaged persons. Many of the "ongoing services to the general public" appear to have been services initiated earlier with LSCA Title I funds, and may have been deemed to be "innovative" at the time of their initiation, if not currently. Therefore, the fact that an LSCA Title I-supported service was not found in this study to be "innovative" does not *necessarily* mean that Federal funds simply supplanted State and local revenues for basic library services.

The 1981 study also found that LSCA Title I funds represented 25% of all funds specifically devoted to State-sponsored, innovative, public library projects. Such projects involved the introduction of new technologies, community outreach services, continuing education for librarians, provision of services to the blind and physically disabled, establishment of regional library systems, and improving the capacities of State library agencies. The potential significance and effect of LSCA Title I funds depends primarily on whether they are viewed as a small part of the total revenues of libraries, or as a possibly substantial share of "seed money" for expanded and innovative services.

Title II, Public Library Construction and Technology Enhancement

Assistance for public library construction projects is authorized under Title II of the LSCA. Authorized uses of Title II funds include, but are not limited to, construction to remove barriers to access by disabled persons, to conserve energy, to enhance library technology, or to renovate historic buildings for use as public libraries. Construction projects assisted under Title II must promote preservation of library materials.

LSCA Title II funds are allocated to States using the same allocation formula and matching requirements as for Title I, with two exceptions. First, the flat grant amount is $100,000 for each State ($20,000 for each Outlying Area). Second, the Federal share of total construction costs for each individual project assisted under Title II may not

exceed 50%. Grants for individual projects within each State are made at the discretion of the State library agency. Funds were not appropriated for LSCA Title II throughout most of the 1970s and early 1980s. However, Federal support for this program was revived in FY1983, and it has been funded in each of FY1985-1995.

Issues. In general, Federal programs in the areas of education, arts, and humanities provide few funds for construction, other than "minor remodelling" to the extent necessary to provide a specific type of service. This is at least partially because construction is usually considered to be a "basic" cost of providing education and related services, while Federal aid tends to be limited to the "supplementary" costs of providing "special" services. The primary issues with respect to this assistance are whether it is an appropriate Federal role, and whether the aid is necessary.

While States are given substantial discretion in awarding LSCA Title II funds, projects to be assisted include but are not limited to those to increase access to libraries by the disabled, to conserve energy, to accommodate new technologies, or to convert historic buildings for use as libraries. Further, States and localities are required to match the Federal funds for each construction project, on at least a one-to-one basis. Thus, Title II funds provide only partial support for construction projects that are intended to help meet a Federal mandate (with respect to accessibility for the disabled) or national legislative goals (of energy conservation, preservation of library materials or of historic buildings, or adoption of new information technologies) under the LSCA or other statutes. In particular, the need for construction activity to increase access for the disabled has presumably been expanded with the recent enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Nevertheless, there is no requirement that Title II funds be used to meet any of the above purposes, and the legislation contains no test or measure of need, other than the income-related matching requirement. As a result, it might be argued that Title II funds may largely supplant State or local funds that might otherwise be used for construction of public libraries.

Finally, Title II grants may be viewed in the context of total expenditures for public library construction in the United States. The annual average of total public library construction and renovation expenditures in FY1988-1993 is reported as having been $351 million. The FY1995 appropriation for Title II of $16,718,000 would represent approximately 5.1% of such an expenditure level.

Title III, Interlibrary Cooperation and Resource Sharing

Title III of the LSCA authorizes grants to the States for planning, developing, and implementing cooperative library resource-sharing networks. Historically, such resource-sharing primarily has taken the form of interlibrary loan programs, under which books or other materials not available at one library could be provided through other cooperating libraries in the region or State. Later, Title III funds began to be used to support the development of statewide and even regional or national computer networks, such as the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC; originally the Ohio College Library Center). Currently, Title III funds may be used to provide access for staff and patrons to the Internet -- a worldwide "network of networks" connecting a rapidly expanding range of information sources. Under P.L. 101-254, States may also use Title III funds for preservation of library materials.

LSCA Title III funds are allocated to States using the same allocation formula as for Title I, with two exceptions. First, the flat grant amount is $40,000 for each State ($10,000 for each Outlying Area). Second, there are no matching or maintenance-of-effort requirements for Title III.

Issues. It is widely believed that LSCA Title III funds helped to stimulate the development and rapid growth of interlibrary loan programs and regional library consortia in the early years of the program, and of computerized bibliographic information transfer networks more recently. The major current issue for this program is whether the Title III funds any longer significantly stimulate the development or expansion of these services, or the initiation of newer information and communications technologies, such as participation in the Internet, optical (laser) disks, or satellite information retrieval.

Unfortunately, the lack of any substantial or recent evaluations of this program makes it impossible to provide reliable answers to such questions. While it is possible that Title III funds are now largely used to maintain services that were initiated with previous grants, and that might be continued with State or local funds if Title III aid were no longer available, there is no way to confirm such a hypothesis. Of possible relevance here is the fact that basic access to the Internet and other information sharing networks is generally high for large, urban library systems, but low for rural or small town libraries. Where access exists, the expanded services are usually very popular, and client demand significantly exceeds supply of available terminals and budgets.

As noted in the introduction of this issue brief, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) of the Department of Commerce also provides grants to libraries, along with other government and private, nonprofit institutions, for development of computer-based information-sharing networks. For FY1995, this agency has provided five grants, totaling $1.9 million, to public and other libraries.

Title IV, Library Services for Indian Tribes

Title IV of the LSCA is not a separate authorization of appropriations; rather, it provides that a share of appropriations for Titles I through III be set aside to support services to American Indians, including Alaskan Natives, and Native Hawaiians. The amount of each of Title I through III's appropriations to be set-aside is 1.5% for American Indian tribes, and 0.5% for Native Hawaiians. Half of the funds available to serve American Indians are to be allocated in equal portions to each applicant Indian tribe, with the other half distributed on a competitive basis among such tribes. Each program for which funds are so granted must be administered by a librarian. The grants for services to Native Hawaiians are to be distributed to organizations representing persons that are recognized as Native Hawaiians by the Governor of Hawaii.

Issues. At least partially because this is a relatively small program, involving set-asides of funds from the existing LSCA Titles I through III, there have been no evaluations, and no major issues have arisen. Data from ED indicate that in FY1994, the funds for services to American Indians were distributed through 200 basic (equal amounts per tribe) and 12 special project (competitive) grants. The basic grants were

used primarily to purchase library materials and to supplement the salaries of library staff. The special project grants were devoted largely to building new facilities or

acquiring computer equipment. The funds reserved for services to Native Hawaiians were used for eight local projects to increase access to library services, build collections, provide staff training, or supplement salaries for Native Hawaiian librarians.

It might be questioned whether the practice of providing small basic grants to each of several Indian tribes and Alaskan Native villages is an effective use of funds, although the provision of equal grants per applicant tribe from one-half of the reserved funds is required by the authorizing legislation. Finally, it might be questioned whether the grant for services to Native Hawaiians is disproportionately large in comparison to the number of such individuals. According to the 1990 Census, there were 211,014 Native Hawaiians, 1,959,234 American Indians (including Eskimos and Aleuts), and 246,539,625 other persons in the United States in that year. On the basis of these population figures, FY1995 appropriations for LSCA Titles I-III would be equal to $0.50 per person for the non-Indian/non-Hawaiian population, $0.96 per person for American Indians, and $2.96 per person for Native Hawaiians. Thus, while all three amounts are small on a per capita basis, the amount for Native Hawaiians is approximately six times as high as for the general population, and three times as high as for American Indians.

Title V, Foreign Language Materials Acquisition

Under Title V of the LSCA, grants are authorized for the acquisition of foreign language materials. Grants are to be made on a nationally competitive basis and, in general, no annual grant shall be for more than $35,000; however, up to 30% of Title V funds may be used for grants of up to $125,000 each. Funds have been appropriated only for FY1991 through 1993 for this Title.

Issues. This program has only recently and (so far) temporarily been funded; no major issues have arisen with respect to it. For each year funded so far (FY1991-93), approximately 30 grants were made under this program, with an average award of slightly more than $30,000. It might be questioned whether a program with such a low authorization level could have a significant impact on the foreign language collections of more than a very small number of public libraries. Alternatively, it might be argued that increased national interest in foreign language education, and the increased rate of immigration from non-English speaking countries, might justify the provision of funding for LSCA Title V.

Title VI, Library Literacy Programs

LSCA Title VI authorizes grants for adult literacy programs in public libraries, to be made on the basis of a national competition. No annual grant may exceed $35,000. The grants may be used for coordinating, planning, promoting, or conducting literacy programs in public libraries. Grants may also be used for training librarians and volunteers to participate in such programs. There is also a related, and thus far unfunded, authorization for library learning center programs under Title VIII of the LSCA (see below).

Issues. The primary issues for LSCA Title VI are whether such a small program with a relatively low grant size limit ($35,000) can measurably reduce the extent of adult illiteracy; whether this program complements -- or duplicates -- the programs of the Adult Education Act; and whether grants under this program will usefully add to the number of library literacy activities being conducted without Federal assistance.

Descriptive data from ED indicate that in FY1993, 12 Title VI grants were made to States, primarily to train librarians and volunteers, coordinate statewide literacy networks, or provide technical assistance to local librarians. Also in FY1993, 236 grants were made to local libraries for acquisition of instructional materials, to recruit and train volunteers, and to promote literacy programs in local communities. The average size of all awards was $32,767.

In 1993, ED published *Learning From Public Library Literacy Programs*, by Andrew J. Seager and others, a case study of a variety of adult literacy programs in public libraries. The study included projects funded by LSCA Title VI as well as other sources. It focused on identifying the elements of effective adult literacy programs in public libraries, such as trained library staff, involvement of volunteer tutors, convenient scheduling, overcoming client resistance, publicity and outreach.

It may be questioned whether LSCA Title VI unnecessarily duplicates authorities in LSCA Title I or the Adult Education Act (AEA). Literacy activities are among the many authorized uses of funds under LSCA Title I. Further, AEA grants may be made to, or services provided at, public libraries, at State discretion. However, there is no evidence that either of these other programs supports literacy programs in public libraries to a significant extent.

Title VII, Evaluation and Assessment

One of two new Titles added to the LSCA in 1990, Title VII authorizes appropriations for evaluation and assessment of LSCA programs. No funds have yet been appropriated for this program.

As noted above, especially with respect to LSCA Title I, the lack of recent evaluation data has been a significant hindrance to oversight on the uses of Federal library aid funds. If money is appropriated for the new Title VII, the resulting evaluation studies should help inform future decisions on the LSCA.

Title VIII, Library Learning Center Programs

This Title was also added to the LSCA in the 1990 amendments. Part A authorizes grants to local public libraries for family learning centers. These centers would provide a variety of services to support educational activities of parents and their children. Priority would be placed on services to adolescent parents, single-parent families, families in which both parents are employed outside the home, families with limited English language proficiency, and educationally disadvantaged adults and their children. At least 25% of grant funds must be used for acquisition of materials, and at least 10% for computer hardware and software. No annual grant under part A could exceed $200,000.

Part B of Title VIII authorizes grants to State library literacy centers. These centers would disseminate materials and assistance to adult literacy programs in public libraries, such as those assisted under LSCA Title VI. State grants may not exceed $350,000 in the first year that a State receives a part B grant, and $100,000 in the second or third year. Second and third year grant funds must be matched, on a one-for-one basis, from non-Federal sources.

No funds have yet been appropriated for this new Title. No funds may be appropriated unless total appropriations for LSCA Titles I through III equal or exceed 104% of the previous year level.

As with LSCA Title VII, few issues have arisen with respect to a program that has not yet been funded. If Title VIII were funded, it might be questioned whether the new programs duplicate, or complement, the library literacy programs of LSCA Title VI, LSCA Title I, or the AEA.

Recommendations for Change in Federal Aid to Public Libraries

Previous Proposals of the Reagan, Bush, and Clinton Administrations

For each fiscal year 1982 through 1995, the Reagan, Bush, and Clinton Administrations have requested substantially fewer funds for LSCA programs than had been appropriated for the preceding year. In fact, no funds at all were requested for fiscal years 1983 through 1990. The primary rationale offered for these proposed spending cuts was that the LSCA had served its original purpose of extending basic library services to rural and other previously unserved areas, that LSCA aid represented a very small share of total library funding, and that Federal aid to libraries should either be eliminated completely or limited to a few authorized activities of the highest priority.

When any funds were requested, it was proposed that they be limited to a portion of the activities and Titles authorized under the LSCA. For example, for FY1992, the Bush Administration proposed that a total of $35 million be appropriated, to be allocated under the formula for LSCA Title I, but be used by the States only for literacy activities authorized under LSCA Title VI. Most recently, the Clinton Administration proposed for FY1995 that funds be appropriated only for LSCA Titles I and III, at levels equal to the FY1994 appropriation for each of these Titles, and that funds be eliminated for LSCA Titles II and VI. Thus far, none of these Administration proposals to eliminate or substantially reduce LSCA appropriations has been adopted. The Clinton Administration has not yet made a proposal with respect to the upcoming consideration of LSCA reauthorization, although some indication of its preferences should accompany the FY1996 budget request.

1991 White House Conference on Library and Information Services

Two White House Conferences on Library and Information Services have been held, in 1979 and 1991. Each of them brought together library advocates from a variety of professions and locations, and produced numerous recommendations for changes in

national policies affecting libraries and related institutions. The independent National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) organizes the White House conferences on libraries plus other conferences and seminars, and helps in collection of data on libraries in the States.

The 1991 White House Conference on Library and Information Services produced 97 recommendations under the major categories of access, governance, marketing, networking, national information policy, preservation, services, technology, training of end-users, and personnel. Major recommendations regarding Federal aid to, and policy for, libraries included:

1. **Access** -- increased Federal aid should be provided to libraries of all types for collections development, including aid to meet the needs of an increasingly linguistically and culturally diverse population, and the disabled.

2. **Governance** -- a National Institute for Library and Information Services should be created; funding for Federal libraries and library assistance programs should be increased; and libraries should be eligible for most Federal education assistance programs.

3. **Marketing** -- model programs to promote libraries should be developed, evaluated, and disseminated with Federal assistance.

4. **Networking** -- networks of all types should be established and enhanced with Federal assistance to share information resources as widely as possible; and standards for information-sharing networks should be established and disseminated with Federal Government support and leadership.

5. **National Information Policy** -- charges for postage and telecommunications of library materials should be reduced; copyright laws should be amended to ease access to publications; national information policy should allow maximum public access, through libraries, to information about, or generated by, government; the Internet should be available to all libraries, schools, and homes; the Federal depository library program should be expanded.

6. **Preservation** -- a national preservation policy should be adopted, including Federal support for State preservation programs.

7. **Services** -- ED should develop methods to assess the impact of libraries on their communities, and the needs of communities for library services; Federal categorical aid for school libraries should be established; the Federal Government should fund demonstration programs of model library services to children and young adults; partnerships between public libraries and schools should be supported; and literacy programs in libraries should be expanded.

8. **Technology** -- effective access to the Internet and other aspects of the evolving National Information Infrastructure (NII) should be provided through public libraries.

Since the 1991 White House Conference, no legislation has been introduced that would adopt all or most of these recommendations. The recommendation for a specific

authorization of Federal aid to school libraries was incorporated into the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA) in 1994 (P.L. 103-382), which authorizes a new (thus far unfunded) program of aid to school libraries under Title III, part F, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

LSCA Reauthorization Options

The primary issues with respect to LSCA Title I, and the LSCA in general, are whether the Act's purposes have been met, whether the program continues to have substantial impact on the availability and quality of library services, and whether the LSCA should be substantially revised to better address contemporary needs for public library services.

1. Eliminate Support for Libraries Under the LSCA

The primary original purpose of the Library Services Act of 1956 was to extend public library services to rural and other areas that had no public libraries. This basic goal appears to have been met; ED estimates that 96% of the United States population has access to public library services, and that the remaining 4% live in such isolated circumstances that extension of services to them would be uneconomical. Further, since the LSCA represents only a small share of total public library revenues, its elimination might have little negative impact.

In response, proponents of a continued LSCA might note that there is no general consensus on standards for "adequate," as opposed to minimal, public library services, nor may it be justifiably claimed that 96 percent or more of the American population has access to "adequate" public library services. While LSCA funds are a small share of total library budgets, they likely represent a large share of the limited funds devoted to new technologies, service innovations, or expansion of services to disadvantaged populations. Further, if the original purpose of the LSCA has been largely met, then it might be revised to focus on more contemporary needs in such areas as access to the Internet and other information networks. Many see an increasing gap in information access between the affluent -- with home personal computers, access to Internet and other telecommunications services, etc. -- and others with less income, who have neither such computer equipment nor the knowledge to use it. While these developments lead some to question the future need for public libraries, others foresee an increasingly important role for public libraries as sources of access to, and training in the use of, an increasing variety of information resources, as information broker, and as "safety net." Continued Federal aid might help to stimulate and support such future services.

One indication of the level of State interest in and need for aid in expanding access to computer information-sharing networks is provided by a recent competition for a grant under the Library Research and Demonstration Program (Title II, part B, Higher Education Act). Under this program, a grant was offered for a "Statewide Multitype Library Network and Database" project in 1994. Twenty-one States competed for the $2.49 million grant, requesting a total of $56 million to provide statewide access to the Internet and other networks in all libraries.

2. Consolidate the LSCA Into Two New Titles (American Library Association Proposal)

The American Library Association (ALA) has developed, and is apparently still refining, an LSCA reauthorization proposal that would consolidate current authorities into two Titles, with an intention of increasing State and local flexibility, while focusing available aid on current needs.

As currently drafted, Part A of Title I of the ALA proposal would provide State grants to increase access through technology. Funds could be used for information sharing, including the Internet and other computer networks in the NII; digitization of library holdings so that they could be shared through computer networks; preservation; and development of databases. Library support of lifelong learning and community economic development could also be funded under this Part.

Part B of Title I of the ALA proposal would support increased access to library services for populations with special needs, including the disabled, older persons, disadvantaged children and youth, or recent immigrants, with a focus on central urban and dispersed rural areas. The allocation formula for Title I would be generally similar to those of LSCA Titles I-III currently -- a minimum allotment per State, with funds above this amount allocated in proportion to total population. Within each State, there would be a reservation for localities of at least $1.50 per preschool-aged child in a poor family, and $1.00 per school-aged child in a poor family.

Title II of the proposed legislation includes general provisions, including new requirements for State advisory councils on library and information services, and evaluation of activities funded under the program. Finally, national library service goals would be established. The proposed goals are that every person in the United States will be served by a library that:

- Provides its users access to electronic information through national and international networks;
- Contributes to lifelong learning and to workforce and economic development by providing resources and services designed to meet local community needs;
- Offers a full range of resources and programs to develop reading and thinking skills for children and ensure a readiness to learn;
- Offers targeted services to people of diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds, to people who have disabilities, and to those with limited functional literacy or information skills; and
- Offers adequate facilities, staff, collections, hours of operation, and electronic access to information.

Proponents of the ALA proposal might argue that it represents an appropriately modest enhancement of the current authority, an increase in State and local flexibility, and an updating of LSCA's priorities to meet current needs. Some opponents might argue, as stated above, that continued LSCA aid is unnecessary, or is unaffordable in

the current environment of Federal fiscal constraint. Others may feel that the proposal is too modest and does not address the large variety of current needs (see option 3, below). Finally, others may believe that by authorizing only State formula grants, the proposal overlooks the desirability of certain "national" activities in support of public library services (see option 6, below).

3. Continue Only LSCA Titles I and III

As noted earlier, the Clinton Administration proposed that funding be continued only for LSCA Titles I and III in its FY1995 budget request. This approach would maintain funding for the two largest LSCA programs that provide States substantial flexibility in meeting the priority needs of information sharing, innovation, and services to the disadvantaged. In general terms, this approach is similar to that of the ALA proposal described above.

4. Add Selected "National" Activities to State Library Support Under the LSCA

A potential criticism of the approaches described under options 2 and 3, above, is that aid would be limited to State grants, while certain potentially important activities in support of public libraries might be conducted most effectively on a "national" scale. Such activities might include: library research and evaluation; expanding access to research library collections; increasing the supply of materials (full text of books, photographs and other images, etc.) in digital form, for dissemination through the Internet and other networks; or efforts to maximize participation of public and other libraries in the development of the evolving NII. For such activities, a limited number of targeted grants for the Nation as a whole may be more cost-effective than formula grants spread among all of the States. Thus, in addition to the two types of services described in options 2 and 3, an authorization for national activities might be proposed.

In response, opponents might argue that such national activities are not priority needs; that small, discretionary grant programs are "wasteful" because they may require as many Federal bureaucratic resources as much larger State grant programs; or that useful services can best be supported indirectly, by giving State and local libraries more resources to buy them.

5. Substantially Expand Federal Aid to Public Libraries, in Accordance With Recommendations of the White House Conference

A large expansion in LSCA authorizations, in line with recommendations of the 1991 White House Conference, might be proposed. Proponents might argue that such an expansion is necessary to meet a variety of current needs: to narrow a possibly growing gap in access to library and information resources between affluent individuals, who may have personal computers and individual access to the Internet and other networks, and others with less income who lack such private resources or skills in obtaining information; to enable libraries to help schools and pupils meet the National Education Goals; to keep up with the expanding range of information hardware and software, such as CD-ROMs; or to serve all segments of an increasingly diverse population.

In response, opponents of this approach might note that while LSCA funding has not been sharply reduced in recent years, as several Administrations have proposed, neither the Congress nor the Executive Branch has been inclined to significantly increase funding for public libraries in recent years. Further, there seems likely to be more, not less, constraint on domestic, discretionary spending in the next few years.

6. Continue the LSCA in Substantially Its Current Form

It might be proposed that the LSCA be continued in essentially its current form, perhaps with selected refinements to each Title, especially those that have not yet been funded, and a limited number of new authorities. This would be consistent with the evolution of the LSCA over four decades, including the last substantive reauthorization in 1990. Supporters of this approach could argue that the LSCA already is an appropriately modest and flexible Federal effort to support the States and their public library systems.

There are several arguments against such an approach. New authorities added in 1990 have not yet been funded. Both the Clinton Administration and the ALA have proposed reducing the number of funded Titles in the LSCA. There are indications that many in the 104th Congress may be interested in consolidating and simplifying existing Federal assistance programs, especially through the elimination of small, discretionary grants. The evolution of the LSCA has resulted in the accretion of several requirements that may significantly reduce State and local flexibility in use of this aid. Finally, conditions and needs of libraries are changing, and may require a fresh approach.

FOR ADDITIONAL READING

Barr, Catherine, editor. *The Bowker Annual Library and Book Trade Almanac*. R.R. Bowker. 1994. 843 p.

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U.S. Library of Congress. *Federal Assistance to Libraries: Current Programs and Issues*. CRS Report for Congress 92-317 EPW, by Wayne Riddle. March 25, 1992. 37 p.

U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science. *Libraries and the National Information Infrastructure: Proceedings of the 1994 Forum on Library and Information Services Policy*. 91 p.